WHAMO

World-Herald Attitude Monitoring Operation

Edited by Frances Mendenhall
551-2629

A citizens' organization providing an alternative voice.

March, 1988
Vol. III, Number 3

This issue is complimentary to new readers.
All others please do your duty and fill out the coupon on page 2. We depend on member support.

PROUD: Riverfront Plan's Flaws Concealed

PROUD (People for Responsible Omaha Urban Development), are more than a group of historic preservationists, as our favorite local daily likes to call them.

Their goal is to ensure that the Riverfront Redevelopment Plan provides the promised long term benefit to those who are paying for it --the taxpayers of Omaha and Douglas County.

They support the redevelopment of the riverfront area, and corporate decisions to locate there. However, they have clear evidence (which they showed Whamo in large quantities) that the proposed plan is seriously flawed. Unless changes are made, they say, Omahans and Douglas County residents will suffer permanent damage to our riverfront's development potential. We will also face the largest wholesale destruction of a National Register Historic District in our country's history.

PROUD members believe that the plan's flaws have been concealed from the public in order to speed passage of the plan. They lay most of the blame for this on the Riverfront Development promoters themselves, but they also provided Whamo with an astonishing stack of clippings that they say report a dramatically different picture from that uncovered by their research, done largely from public documents such as the Riverfront Plan itself or the Riverfront contract.

Some examples:

The World-Herald has promoted the idea that the park will be a "world class gateway to the state," leading into their Feb.3 front page article with "the City Council opened the gate

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Newspaper Ignores Demolition Debate

Editorial, Nebraska City News-Press, March 3, 1988

It is generally accepted that newspapers keep their opinions where they belong -- on the opinion page.

This, however is not the case with the Omaha World-Herald, which is having difficulty holding back its excitement about the planned demolition of a large portion of the Old Market area in downtown Omaha.

ConAgra's proposed riverfront development will be the largest demolition of buildings ever in a National Historic Register district. This is not a distinction to be proud of.

There has been an outcry against the proposed demolition of the Jobbers Canyon area east of the Old Market from many preservationists in Omaha, the state, and even on the national level. Yet the World-Herald gives scant attention to this other side of the story.

Instead, the paper dishes up several editorials disguised as "stories" each week which sing the praises of LB 775, ConAgra, Northwestern Bell and the destruction ofa portion of one of Omaha's most popular attractions.

Many of the shops will remain in the Old Market, but the atmosphere will be gone forever once the destruction begins. The area's famous backdrop of old warehouses will be replaced by a bunch of low-rise glass boxes.

It's a shame that this slash and burn corporate mentality, lacking any imagination, is endorsed by the state's largest newspaper.

And Omaha's version of the Supreme Soviet, the city council, shows an equal lack of imagination by approving of the destruction despite the angry outcrys coming from the majority seated in the audience of the council chamber.

If it had any civic pride, it would endorse a proposal to reuse the old buildings, but the old boys prevail once again in the dismantling of Omaha.

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Nebraska and Nuclear Waste:

W-H "Nukes" Waste Site Opposition

by Tom Foster

The World-Herald wasted no time developing "news" that was critical of efforts to put the nuclear waste issue on the ballot.

A citizens' group, Nebraskans for the Right to Vote, is circulating petitions seeking to withdraw Nebraska from the Central Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact.

The source of the "big news," none other than nuclear guru Ray Peery, Executive Director of the compact itself, tells us that our maps are inaccurate--never mind the fact that the data on which the maps were based are just fine.

So our consulting firm "wasted" our money on inaccurate maps. And the World-Herald wasted space in at least three different editions explaining that petition circulators were using these bogus maps to drum up support for the petition initiative.

Mr. Peery will be pleased to discover that the petition circulators don't need thousand dollar maps that are inaccurate to drum up resistance to low-level waste that will remain radioactive for thousands of years. It will take a lot more than an artist's drawing of a metal storage building on the front page of the World-Herald to convince the electorate that compact regulations do not prohibit landfill methods.

U.S. Ecology, the company contracted to operate the facility, prefers direct burial methods, even though these methods failed in Maxey Flats, Ky; Robstown, Tx.; Richland, Wa.; and Sheffield, Ill.

The company's design preferences are cause enough for alarm, but its record of mismanagement is still more frightening. Although U.S. Ecology has managed to escape the staggering financial liabilities caused by the numerous failed dump sites, it may not escape the responsibility for mismanaging the Sheffield, Illinois, dump.

If the Illinois Attorney General's office wins two lawsuits seeking $597 million, the company admits it will go broke. When nuclear waste contractors go bankrupt the state inherits all their "assets." That's right, Nebraskans, just like the poor fools in Illinois, we could be the proud owners of millions of cubic feet of nuclear waste. U.S. Ecology takes off for another state, where they resume their collection of nuclear waste and the collection of tax dollars lifted from the wallets of another batch of bewildered folks who think the nuke issue is too complicated for ordinary citizens.

If public officials object, perhaps U.S. Ecology will hand out jobs and bribe legislators as they did in Kentucky. Nebraska deserves a responsible dump operator, not the outfit whose subsidiaries in November shipped leaky containers of nuclear waste from Texas to Nevada on three different occasions.

Why hire a company that has never successfully handled nuclear waste for any length of time to build and run our nuclear waste dump? Perhaps the compact commission wants to match the operator with the builder a la Laurel and Hardy. Yes, the builder of this waste dump will be Bechtel, renowned for having the conscience of an underfed shark.

Bechtel goofups include these nuclear reactors: the Zimmer Reactor, Midland, Trojan, Palo Verde, San Onofre, Susquehanna, Palisades Reactors, and Wolf Creek. These ecological disasters are fully documented proof that Bechtel was guilty of using low quality building materials, and the consequent substandard construction and quality assurance.

Bechtel and U.S. Ecology have been in the nuclear racket for years, but their major claim to fame is "dump and run," as citizen-activists have come to call it. Shouldn't OPPD and NPPD, who are in less of a position to declare bankruptcy in the event of an accident, build their own dump? Nebraskans deserve a utility operated by nuclear engineers who will lose a billion dollar bond if the dump leaks.

Nebraska originally was not even considered a possible site for the waste dump, since even the smallest spill would quickly migrate through our sandy subsoils into the Ogalala Aquifer. The Ogalala Aquifer is the largest body of fresh water in the world. It supplies people from Texas to North Dakota with drinking water, and its contamination with nuclear materials would be the biggest eccological disaster of all time.

Drinking and hauling bottled water forever is no fun--just ask the people of Sheffield, Ill.

Nebraska was selected since the primary source of news and information in our state is permanently muzzled by the nuclear construction industry.

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☐I can't manage a large donation, but I promise to brag about WHAMO to all my friends; please send me the newsletter.

☐Count me in for some donated labor.
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- ☐I know how to use Appleworks (or some other data base) and can help with the mailing list.
- ☐I am pretty good at layout and production.
- ☐I like to draw cartoons.

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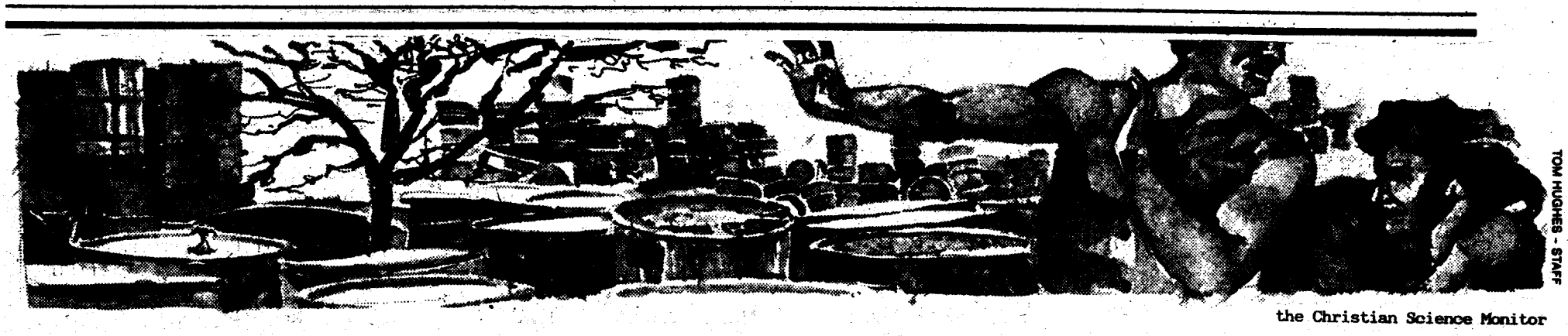
Who Wins? Who Loses?



TOM HUGHES - STAFF

the Christian Science Monitor

1972: Nukes, Kiewit Co. & the World-Herald

The Kiewit Corporation is the former owner of the World-Herald. In its publication, "A Century of Service," the World-Herald told us "the Kiewit company's differences with the Omaha Public Power District over construction costs at the Fort Calhoun nuclear power plant and the sudden collapse of the Clarkson Hospital parking facility were news. And they were treated as such, on Page 1."

In recent years, 83% of World-Herald stock has been transferred to certain employees of the paper, most of whom do not vote at stockholders' meetings. The other 17% is owned by the Kiewit Foundation, technically separate from its parent corporation.

From the New York Times, 3/13/72

by Anthony Ripley

excerpted

Fort Calhoun [is] a tiny town 19 miles north of Omaha. The Peter Kiewit Sons' Company holds the basic construction and a share of the contract for the footings for a 455,000 net kilowatt power plant at the site.

The job is far behind schedule, far over price, and beset with troubles that the safety experts at the Atomic Energy Commission do not like to see in the power plants they license for operation.

Carl A. Goldstein, of the Atomic Industrial Forum in New York, a nuclear industry trade association, said few nuclear plants have ever approached the record for cost and delay of the one at Fort Calhoun, even though only two of more than 70 in operation or under construction have kept to their schedules. "It is a notorious case of underbidding," Mr. Goldstein said.

The leading critic of the way the project has been handled has been Edward Zorinsky, 4[illegible] years old, an Omaha businessman and a Republican serving his first six-year term on the board of the Omaha Public Power District.

Peter Kiewit, 71, heads the construction company started by his father in 1884. He has built most of the modern buildings in the downtown skyline, the downtown freeways and is one of the city's major philanthropists.

He is chairman of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad Company, and a director of the Northwestern Bell Telephone Company, the Omaha National Bank and the Northern Natural Gas Company.

He personally knows former President Johnson. His wealth was estimated in 1963 by Fortune Magazine in the $150- to $200-million range.

According to the company magazine, the Kiewit companies have 124 projects currently underway in the United States and Canada. 98 of them publicly financed.

Fortune Magazine, in April 1966, in one of the few reviews ever done of this corporate empire, said Mr. Kiewit finances, subcontracts and supplies much of his own building operations and is devoted to secrecy. The magazine quoted him as saying "publicity never landed us any jobs."

Mr. Kiewit's parent holding company oversees about 40 subsidiaries in bonding and insurance, equipment rental, quarries, gravel pits, investments, concrete structures, paving and dredging.

Other subsidiaries are coal strip mining companies, one of which provides fuel for for the Omaha Public Power District.

He owns 93 per cent of the World Publishing Company, which puts out the Omaha World-Herald and operates KETV, one of city's three television stations.

In Omaha's social world, Mr. Kiewit is a governor and past reigning monarch of Ak-Sar-Ben, the socially correct organization of business leaders that combines boosterism, civic projects and charity. Ak-Sar-Ben is partly funded from the horse race track it operates in

Employees of the Omaha Public Power District belong to Ak-Sar-Ben, with the district paying half of their annual dues.

Mr. Kiewit, when in Omaha, lives in a penthouse apartment in the Kiewit Plaza Building with his wife. His only son is a lawyer in Phoenix, Arizona.

Union men say they have ridden out to building sites with Mr. Kiewit in an anonymous old car. He parks near a construction job and watches his men with binoculars to make sure the work is going well.

Mr. Zorinsky is a contrasting figure. His business world is almost untouched by Mr. Kiewit's position. He is vice president of a vending machine and candy and tobacco company.

Continued, page 7

Reactors Produce 99% of Waste's Radioactivity

by Ted Hoffman
Chadron

There are a large number of "users" that generate radioactive waste, including hospitals, universities, medical schools, utilities, and other industries. It is important to remember, however, that although few among the number of users, nuclear power plants are the source of the lion's share of the radioactive waste.

Institutions such as hospitals and universities, which generate only about 0.2% of the radioactivity in radioactive waste, are being used to run interference for the nuclear industry.

When waste from decommissioned nuclear reactors are included in the waste stream, about 99% of the radioactivity in low-level waste will be derived from reactors.[1]

During a five year period, ending in 1985, 33,299 curies of radioactivity were shipped to waste dumps from Nebraska. The breakdown was 33,293 curies from reactors, six from industry and none from institutions.[2]

The Central Interstate Compact Commission distributed a packet of information on radioactive waste disposal. Unfortunately, they failed to ask the right questions.

The most significant and long lived source of radioactivity comes from the irradiated components from inside the reactor vessel that must be ...changed periodically. These irradiated components comprise onlyl 5% of the waste volume but generate more than 85% of the radioactivity or a typical 1000-megawatt plant.[1]

1. *Living Without Landfills, Resnikoff.*

2. *U.S. Department of Energy. State-By-State Assessment of Low-Level* Radioactive Waste Shipped to Commercial Disposal Sites

The Manufacture of Consent

by Noam Chomsky

The following article is excerpted from "The Manufacture of Consent" (copyright 1984), as reprinted in The Chomsky Reader, Pantheon Books, NY, NY, 1987. Reprinted by permission.
(Part one of two parts.)

The genius of democratic systems of thought control differs markedly from totalitarian practice. Those who rule by violence tend to be "behaviorist" in their outlook. What people may think is not terribly important; what counts is what they do. They must obey and this obedience is secured by force. The penalties for disobedience vary depending on the characteristics of the state.

In the USSR today, the penalties may be psychiatric torture, or exile, or prison, under harsh and grim conditions. In a typical U.S. dependency such as El Salvador, the dissident is likely to be found in a ditch, decapitated after hideous torture; and when a sufficient number are dispatched, we can even have elections in which people march toward democracy by rejecting the Nazi-like D'Aubuisson in favor of Duarte, who presided over one of the great mass murders of the modern period.

Democratic systems are quite different. It is necessary to control not only what people do, but what they think. Since the state lacks the capacity to ensure obedience by force, thought can lead to action and therefore the threat to order must be excised at the source. It is necessary to establish a framework for thought that is constrained within the principles of state religion. These need not be asserted; it is better that they be presupposed, as the unstated framework for thinkable thought.

The critics reinforce this system by tacitly accepting these doctrines, and confining their critique to tactical questions which arise within them. To achieve respectability, to be admitted to the debate, they must accept without question or inquiry the fundamental doctrine that the state is benevolent, governed by the loftiest intentions, adopting a defensive stance, not an actor in world affairs but only reacting to the crimes of others, sometimes unwisely because of personal failure, naivete the complexity of history or an inability to comprehend the evil nature of our enemies. If even the harshest critics adopt these premises, then, the ordinary person may ask, who am I to disagree? The more intensely debate rages between hawks and doves, the more firmly and effectively

> Violence, deceit, and lawlessness are natural functions of the state, any state.

the doctrines of state religion are established. It is because of their notable contribution to thought control that critics are tolerated, indeed honored--that is, those who play by the rules.

This is a system of thought control that was not dreamed of by Orwell, and is never understood by dictators who fail to comprehend the utility for indoctrination of permitting a class of critics who denounce the errors and failings of the leadership while tacitly adopting the crucial premises of the state religion.

* * *

Conquest By Consent

During the Thanksgiving holiday, I took a walk with some friends and family in a national park. We came across a gravestone, which had on it the inscription, "Here lies an Indian woman, a Wampanoag, whose family and tribe gave of themselves and their land that this great land might be born and grow."

Of course, it is not quite accurate to say that the indigenous population gave of themselves and their land for that noble purpose. Rather, they were slaughtered, decimated, and dispersed in the course of one of the greatest exercises in genocide in human history. In short, mass genocide, on a colossal scale, which we celebrate each October when we honor Columbus --a notable mass murderer himself --on Columbus Day.

Hundreds of American citizens, well-meaning and decent people, troop by that gravestone regularly and read it, apparently without reaction; except, perhaps, a feeling of satisfaction that at last we are giving some due recognition to the sacrifices of the native peoples, presumably the reason why it was placed there.

They might react differently if they were to visit Auschwitz or Dachau and find a gravestone reading "Here lies a woman, a Jew, whose family and people gave of themselves and their possessions that this great nation might grow and prosper."

The truth is not entirely suppressed. The distinguished Harvard historian and Columbus biographer Samuel Eliot Morrison does comment that "the cruel policy initiated by Columbus and pursued by his successors resulted in complete genocide.: This statement is "buried halfway into the telling of a grand romance," Howard Zinn observes in his People's History of the United States.

The sentiment on the grave of the Wampanoag woman is not original. One hundred sixty years ago, John Quincy Adams explained in a Fourth of July address that our government is superior to all others because it was based on consent, not conquest: "The first settlers, immediately upon landing, purchased from the Indian natives the right of settlement upon the soil. The slough of brutal force was cast off; all was voluntary: all was unbiased consent: all was the agreement of soul with soul."

The Rule of Law

The process of creating and entrenching highly selective, reshaped or completely fabricated memories of the past is what we call "indoctrination" or "propaganda" when it is conducted by official enemies, and "education," "moral instruction," or "character building," when we do it ourselves. It is a valuable mechanism of control, since it effectively blocks any understanding of what is happening in the world.

One crucial goal of successful education is to deflect attention elsewhere --say, to Vietnam, or Central America, or the Middle East, where our problems allegedly lie --and away from our own institutions and their systematic functioning and behavior, the real source of a great deal of the violence

"The educated classes are typically the most profoundly indoctrinated and ignorant"

and suffering in the world. It is crucially important to prevent understanding and to divert attention from the sources of our own conduct, so that the elite groups can act without popular constraints to achieve their goals —which are called "the national interest" in academic theology.

The importance of blocking understanding, and the great successes that have been achieved, are very well illustrated in our own affairs. [In 1984], the World Court rejected the American contention that it had no jurisdiction with regard to the Nicaraguan complaint concerning U.S. aggression against Nicaragua.

The issue arose [in] April, when Nicaragua brought to the Court its charge that the U.S. was mining its harbors and attacking its territory. With exquisite timing, President Reagan chose that very day to issue a Presidential Proclamation designating May 1 as "Law Day 1984." He hailed our "200-year-old partnership between law and liberty," adding that without law, there can only be "chaos and disorder." The day before, as part of his tribute to the rule of law, he had announced that the United States would not recognize any decision of the World Court.

These events aroused much anger. In the New York Times, Anthony Lewis decried Reagan's "failure to understand what the rule of law has meant to this country." He observed that Senator Moynihan had "made the point with great power" in a law school address in which he criticized the Reagan administration for "forsaking our centuries-old commitment to the idea of law in the conduct of nations" and for its "mysterious collective amnesia," its "losing the memory that there once was such a commitment." Our U.N. delegation, Moynihan said, "does not know the history of our country."

Unfortunately, it is Ronald Reagan and Jeane Kirkpatrick who understand what the rule of law has meant for this country, and it is Anthony Lewis and Senator Moynihan who are suffering from a mysterious collective amnesia. The case they are discussing is a good example. It happened before, in almost exactly the same way. The story is told by Walter LaFeber, in his valuable book Inevitable Revolutions. In 1907, a Central American Court of Justice was established at the initiative of Washington to adjudicate conflicts among the states of the region. "Within nine years," LaFeber observes, "the institution was hollow because twice—in 1912 and 1916—the United States refused to recognize Court decisions that went against its interests in Nicaragua.

"In establishing its control over Central America," LaFeber comments, "the United States killed the institution it had helped create to bring Central America together." A final blow was administered in 1922 when Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes convened a conference of Central American states in Washington. LaFeber Comments: "The occasion was to be a replay of the 1907 conference, when the Central Americans had come to their own conclusions. Now the U.S., with the help of faithful (and Marine occupied) Nicaragua, set the agenda, which included the admonition that no one mention the late, unlamented Central American Court."

There are, to be sure, differences between the earlier case and today's. Now Nicaragua is not under marine occupation — merely under a military attack by a U.S. mercenary army called "freedom fighters"; and the United States is not powerful enough to merely disband the World Court.

The World Court provides some lessons concerning the system of indoctrination. It is easy enough to make fun of Ronald Reagan, but that is itself a diversion from the main point. Violence, deceit, and lawlessness are natural functions of the state, any state. What is important in the present context is the contribution of the harshest critics (within the mainstream) to reinforcing the system of indoctrination, of which they themselves are victims — as is the norm for the educated classes, who are typically the most profoundly indoctrinated and in a deep sense the most ignorant group, the victims as well as the purveyors of the doctrines of the faith.

By these standards, the USSR has a right to blow up Denmark.

The Critics Contribution

The great contribution of the critics is to prevent the realization that what is happening today is not some departure from our historical ideals and practice, to be attributed to the personal feelings of this or that individual. Rather, it is the systematic expression of the way our institutions function, and will continue to function unless impeded by an aroused public that comes to understand their nature and their true history—exactly what our educational institutions must prevent if they are to fulfill their function, namely, to serve power and privilege.

A useful rule of thumb is this: If you want to learn something about the propaganda system, have a close look at the critics and their tacit assumptions. These generally constitute the doctrines of state religion.

Let's take another current case. The justification for our attack on Nicaragua is that Nicaragua is a Soviet proxy, threatening Mexico, ultimately the United States itself. By these standards, the USSR has a right to bomb Denmark, which is no less a threat to them than Denmark is to us — a far greater threat, in fact, because Denmark is part of a hostile military alliance.

In 1926, the marines were sent back to Nicaragua, which they had occupied throughout much of the century, to combat a Bolshevik threat. Then Mexico was a Soviet proxy, threatening Nicaragua, ultimately the United States itself. "Mexico was on trial before the world," President Coolidge proclaimed as he sent the marines to Nicaragua once again, an intervention which led to the establishment of the Somoza dictatorship with its U.S.-trained National Guard and the killing of the authentic Nicaraguan nationalist Sandino. Note that though the cast of characters has changed, the bottom line remains the same: kill Nicaraguans.

Next Month: Part Two — Vietnam: Another Nicaragua?

Ak-Sar-Ben in a "Pickle?"

Virginia Koerselman has been the attorney for a number of pickle card groups since pickle cards were first sold in retail outlets in 1983, including Games People Play; the Viking Ship; St. Martin's Episcopal Church; Find the Kids, Inc.; Women in Community Service; Family Information & Referral; the Children's Fund; and St. Mihiel VFW Post.

by Virginia Koerselman

It should come as a surprise to no one that the King of Nebraska News, the Omaha World-Herald, is an avid supporter of the sport of kings. In the Kingdom of Quivera and the State of Aksarben, not a louder trumpet is heard on the track or off than the voice of the King of News on behalf of the sport of kings.

Pickle Pete's game of pickle cards is trampled beneath the hooves of horses in Quivera's Magic Kingdom. No one tells the public that Pickle Pete's game is grand. We hear nothing of that sort here in Quiveraland.

On Wednesday, November 11, 1987, the King of the News on its editorial page proclaimed "pickle card gambling is not very smart, either as a way of winning money or as a way of contributing to charitable causes." Perhaps the King is suggesting that horse betting is a "smarter" way of winning money. It certainly is not a better way of contributing to charitable causes. The King of News conveniently omits the fact that pickle card revenues contributed far more to charities in the last year than did the Magic Kingdom.

The King tells us (Sunday, September 7, 1986) that a grand jury and the State of Nebraska, are investigating pickle card operations. It neglects to say that the investigations are not of pickle card operations but rather alleged tax evasions of a pickle card operator. In the same story we are told that the "Revenue Department was given broader authority this year to regulate pickles, with tough laws and creation of a Charitable Gaming Division." Since the proclamation we have not been told by the King that the Revenue Department was given $290,000 by the State of Nebraska to hire more legions to investigate and that it has not hired a single foot soldier in the great pickle war.

The great pickle war has raged, with the King setting forth his Queen, Governor Orr, to lead the troops in Lincoln, outside the Magic Kingdom. The King has tried too help his Queen with story after story, but the people will not be fooled now that they can watch the horses on TV. The King has learned too late that horses do not eat pickles but that pickles do eat horses, and so do dogs.

So as to keep Quivera pure for just the sport of kings, we read Clint Highfill write about this year's legislative hearing of a "shell game." The shell game dealt with pickles and bemoaned the fact that over 70 per cent of charitable contributions went for administrative costs from pickle sales. This ignored the fact that in the Magic Kingdom over 90 per cent went for administrative costs.

Each week we read of scams and schemes out there in Pickle Land. We heard of Mr. Palmquist, a pickle salesman to be sure, and how he once filed bankruptcy in a state beside the sea. But never do we read of the fallen knights of the Kingdom or the problems in Quivera when the horses leave the scene.

It is all right when the King proclaims that his horses pay no taxes. The $4 million from Pickle Pete is not enough to support the upper classes. Tax them more, the King will shout, and close those lowly parlors for the parlors, we all know, stink much more than my stables.

Amidst the fine silks of Aksarben, Pickle Pete blue collars will not be found. They probably came to Lincoln to fight the Pickle War. Even down in Lincoln where the King's Queen reigns supreme, knights from Quivera cast a watchful eye. Each day they tell the solons gathered there to pass laws to let the horses run but close those parlors down.

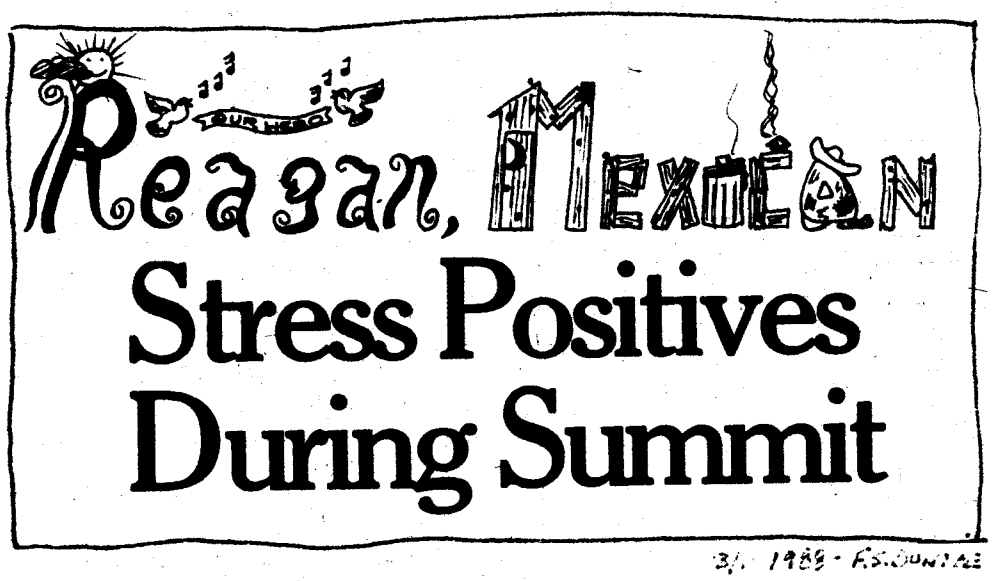
Non Buildup in Nicaragua

From Extra!, Jan/Feb, 1988

Now that the dust has settled on the "revelations" of Nicaraguan defector Roger Miranda, it's clear that not much was new or news, despite the media hype about Nicaragua's "massive arms buildup."

Most journalists didn't bother to analyze the documents Miranda brought from Nicaragua. In fact there was no agreement by the Soviets to provide new weapons, merely a "wish list" from Nicaragua. No major expansion of Nicaragua's regular army was planned; the evidence actually pointed to a reduction from 80,000 to 60 or 70,000 troops. Yet numerous articles falsely reported Nicaraguan intentions to "build up a 600,000 man army."

Six weeks after Miranda faded from the headlines, the Washington Post disclosed (2-4-88) that Miranda was to receive $800,000 from the US government in "rewards, resettlement assistance and a contract for unspecified services." Ironically, Miranda claims he left Nicaragua because of extravagant sums of money supposedly acquired by government officials.



3/. 1988 - F.S. DUNTZE

Whamo member Frank Duntze was inspired by the lead headline of Sunday, February 14, "Reagan, Mexican Stress Positives During Summit," to draw the above embellishment.

Alternatively, they could have said, "The King of America Meets the Frito Bandito," comments Frank, or as the Mexico City *La Prensa* saw it, "President de la Madrid, Gringo Stress Positives During Summit."

Only Public Debate Will Promote Medical Ethics

by Frank S. Duntze

The author has a Masters Degree in Philosophy

The World-Herald editorialized, regarding the physician who wrote about administering a lethal dose of morphine to a terminal cancer patient, that both the act itself and writing about it were "appalling." The editors rhetorically ask how these two events "advance the cause of ethics in the medical profession?"

Here's how: the medical profession, blessed with miraculous technology and cursed with confronting the inevitable frailties of our species, has discovered what they already knew: science can answer questions regarding where, when, who, what and how. But science, unlike theology, philosophy or plain old gut feeling, simply doesn't operate in the realm of why, where value (ethical, moral, etc.) judgments are made.

This doesn't prevent a physician (or any other scientist) from making such judgments. But when he or she does--as in the case in question--the judgment is not scientific, but personal, and outside the specific expertise of the physician.

By recording and publishing this account, the

> ...how to deal with those of us for whom quantity and quality of life have become inversely proportional.

journal editors powerfully and pointedly pushed this increasingly important ethical dilemma in front of a society which must soon, despite its reticence to do so, confront, debate, articulate and assimilate a consensus on how to deal with those of us for whom quantity and quality of life have become inversely proportional.

Regardless of whether one applauds or is appalled by the act the anonymous physician-writer committed, writing and submitting an unblemished (if indeed it was) account of that act was courageous and, I suggest, ethically motivated, at least in part by the desire to stimulate the necessary public consideration of the issues involved.

The World-Herald's value judgment that the physician committed an appalling act is part of that public consideration. Unfortunately, the editors, possessed by a wrong-headed, censorious view regarding the value of public debate on euthanasia, prefers the authoritarian fastidiousness of silence to the messy vibrancy of democratic give-and-take. Though regrettable, it is but piece within the constellation of the World-Herald's conservatism, wherein drugs, teen-age sexuality, pregnancy and other pressing problems can be Just Said No to, if we will all just have the Victorian good grace not to mention them. The newspaper's editors seem incapable of grasping the fundamental principle that the degree to which Ignorance is Bliss depends on whether that's a gnat or an elephant in your soup.

Finally, to the editor's question, "did reporting this event "advance the cause of ethics in the medical profession?"

Ethics are not advanced in that profession; science--the science of prolonging life--is. Ethics are ubiquitously ambient, and the medical profession, as well as other professions, derive their own ethics from the public domain. It is in the public arena that those elements collectively considered to be "quality of life" take shape, the W-H's ostrich-like behavior notwithstanding.

1972: Nukes, Kiewit & the World-Herald

From page 3

During the struggle over the contract with the Kiewit Company two years ago, Mr. Zorinsky made the blunt statement: "What the prime contractor has attempted in increasing the costs of his contracts was tantamount to economic rape of the power district and the people we serve."

The remark was printed, though not prominently, in Mr. Kiewit's World-Herald. Mr. Zorinsky then received a letter canceling an invitation to a dinner party by a Kiewit official. His wife has since been snubbed socially because of it.

Ground for the nuclear plant was purchased in 1965, before Mr. Zorinsky was on the board. As is common in nuclear projects, the work began well before a construction permit was issued in June, 1968.

In January, 1968, a $4.4-million contract was awarded to Kiewit-Raymond, a joint venture firm, to set pilings and a concrete slab for the base of the plant. In mid-February the AEC, in order to make the plant more earthquake proof, ordered pilings driven to bedrock and the sand around the pilings compacted.

This was the first construction step and district officials still maintain that the AEC order forced the contractor into extra work whose ripple effect has been felt throughout the life of the entire project. The district paid out an extra $1.1 million on that contract.

> "The guy's too big. He don't like to be supervised and who the hell wants to incur the wrath of Mr. Kiewit? He owns the newspaper."

The Kiewit company won the bidding for the general construction of the buildings on a bid if $11.9 million in June, 1968. This contract was, of course, dependent on finishing the earlier contract.

The subfoundation work dragged on into the winter months.

In an effort to catch up, two speed-ups of the job, lasting seven and five months each were tried. They were called off on January 23, 1970.

All told, the two "accelerations," cost the district more than $5-million and "we are farther behind than we ever were," Mr. Miller told the board on March 19, 1970.

Kiewit representatives explained to the board that the men were getting in one-another's way, that they were tired and that winter work was more costly.

The giant reactor vessel and steam generators arrived by barge up the Missouri River from Tennessee in April. What with delays and storage charges, a $200,000 move of 200 yards into the plant became a $1.5-million project. One of the steam generators was partly dropped and AEC officials hurried to the scene to examine it. It was all right.

In late May and early June of 1970, the Kiewit Company, demanding $36-million on the contract it had bid at $11.9-million, pulled its men off the job.

With the job shut down, the district board declared an emergency and, over the protests of Mr. Miller and Mr. Zorinsky, passed a resolution giving the Kiewit Company an open-ended contract.

Mr. Zorinsky, after advising the board that they might be held personally responsible for the misspent funds, went too court the next day with a rate-payer's law suit, filed by an acquaintance, asking a $23.2-million ceiling on payments to the contractor and an order barring Kiewit from further walkouts. He won the suit.

Another of the contractors, the Commonwealth Electric Company of Lincoln, won the electrical contract in May, 1960, with a bid of $4.8-million. They are now requesting $11.4-million.

In Nebraska's single-house Legislature, State Senator Terry Carpenter, Democrat of Scottsbluff, has formally requested that the State Attorney General and State Auditor of Public Accounts go over the project and its finances. In January, he told the Unicameral, "I am not going to sit here and let these people be pilfered and let them be overwhelmed because the lousy public power districts, particularly the one in Omaha, became a playpen for unscrupulous contractors or their associates."

In an interview in his office at the capitol in Lincoln, the senator said no one knows exactly what is going on at the construction site.

"It's so damned big and confused and there is a lack of any records so that you've got to take what the contractor says. There's nothing else to do," the senator said.

"The guy's too big. He don't like to be supervised and who the hell wants to incur the wrath of Mr. Kiewit? He owns the newspaper."

From page 1

Flawed Plan

leading to a new 'front door' for Omaha Tuesday..."

PROUD points out that the completed project will not be visible to people driving west on I-480 from Council Bluffs. You could, however, see it if you were flying in on one of ConAgra's helicopters.

The World-Herald has repeatedly cited the figure of $285 million as the value of the project.

PROUD points out that many of the items in the $285 million total are wishful thinking, or not attributable to the project. Some examples: ConAgra's estimated $43-million first phase will not be completed until *1992*. The second phase is ten years away, and may not occur at all according to ConAgra. (ConAgra's spokesperson said, "We have no plans to move other companies to Omaha.") There are *no* commitments from new developers -- so, the $70 million "private developer" figure is imaginary. Union Pacific planned to spend $55 million to renovate its freighthouse whether or not ConAgra located on the riverfront.

World-Herald articles have promised readers a jogger's trail, as mentioned in their January 3 article, "a park...where visitors could jog around an 11-acre lake with a view the Missouri River scenery."

ConAgra, PROUD reminds us, has said, "no" to a jogging trail around the lake. We get a small slope of land between the lake and an earth berm blocking our river view. Old Market patrons will have to walk a mile-long detour around ConAgra's campus to reach the main "park" area.

PROUD members feel that the World-Herald has described Riverfront Development much too optimistically, printing such self-fulfilling prophecies as this headline (Feb. 1) "Riverfront Plan Expected to Get City Council OK," and "Talks Assume Council to OK Plan" (Nov. 3).

On the other hand, they find their cause labeled with negative and skeptical language. A December 6 headline describes them as "Foes" (Foes Rally to Save Jobbers Canyon), and a PROUD member was identified as "Schmidt, who *said he was an architect."*

The World-Herald has eventually printed most of the important facts, said PROUD chairman Mark Himes. It's just that they get lost under an enthusiastic headline or fade away on a jump page.

From the Editor

How gauche

Profound apologies to all south paws. We really blew it, according to one reader, by illustrating our "unsurpassed job opportunity" item in the last newsletter with a right hand. Please don't be offended.

The job, editor of world and national news for this paper, is still open and the pay is as great as ever. We sure are an equal opportunity volunteer organization. Who knows, maybe left handed people *are* smarter.

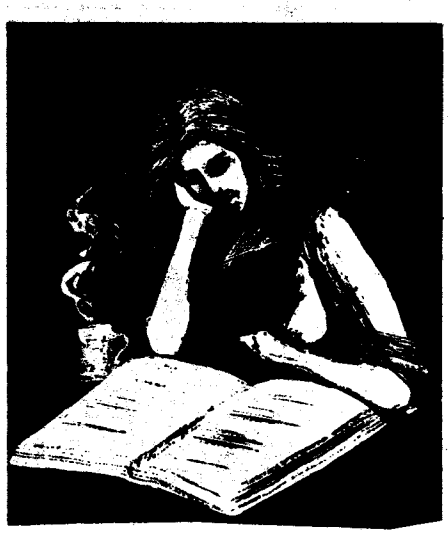
New printer

Isn't WHAMO looking spiffy these days? All this nice looking type and improved layout. We have Jim Leatherwood and Bruce Johansen to thank for the improved layout, and they come cheap. But the print, now that's something else!

So everyone who has been complaining about fuzzy letters, light ink, etc., (and you know who you are) this message is for you.

This terrific new print is the result of a NEW PRINTER. We got a good deal on a 24 pin NLQ printer--$450. But even at that price, we had to float a loan. So, if you like the print, tell us with a nice note on a nice check.

We aim to please.



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